



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

February 19, 2013

Ellen Sebastian
National Marine Fisheries Service, Alaska Regional Office
709 West 9th Street, Suite 453
P.O. Box 21668
Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

Re: EPA comments on the Final EIS for the Issuing Annual Quotas to the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission for a Subsistence Hunt on Bowhead Whales for the Years 2013-2018, EPA Project #12-0030-NOA.

Dear Ms. Sebastian:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Final EIS. In our comment letter on August 29, 2012, we rated the Draft EIS a LO (Lack of Objections). We stated that the Draft EIS evaluated a reasonable range of alternatives and adequately evaluated the potential impacts from the various alternatives to hunters, subsistence communities, and the resource.

We believe the selection of Alternative 3B in the Final EIS provides a good balance between hunter access and protection for the bowhead in the Arctic over the six year management period. While we agree with the EIS conclusion that the No Action alternative (Alternative 1) is "the environmentally preferred alternative based on impacts to bowhead whales", it does not appear to meet the need of allowing some level of harvest to support the nutritional and cultural needs of bowhead communities. We are pleased to see a robust monitoring and evaluation program to ensure that the anticipated effects will be measured and available for use in future quota decisions. We have no other comments on this EIS.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this Final EIS. Please contact me at (206) 553-161 or by electronic mail at reichgott.christine@epa.gov or you may contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff in Anchorage at (907) 271-6324 or by electronic mail at curtis.jennifer@epa.gov should you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christine B. Reichgott".

Christine B. Reichgott, Unit Manager
Environmental Review and Sediments Management Unit